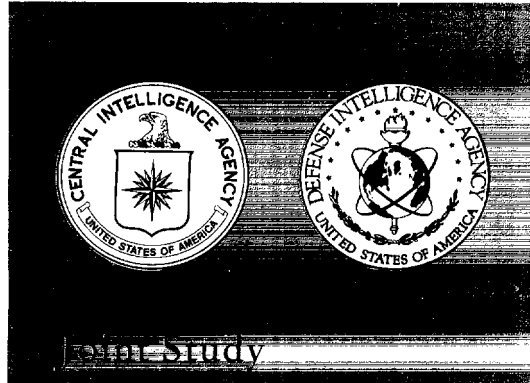


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Weekly Survey of Communist Military Developments in Indochina

NSA review completed

DIA review(s)
completed.

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5 June 1974

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**WEEKLY SURVEY
OF COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS
IN INDOCHINA***

(This report covers the period May 30-June 4, 1974)

The Key Points

- No new infiltration groups were detected starting south during the past week. CIA believes, however, that 7,000 troops were dispatched to northern MR I and the central coast of South Vietnam undetected in April. DoD believes that the evidence supports the inclusion of only 4,500 of these personnel. In any event, the level of infiltration during the 1973/74 cycle now approximates that of 1972/73.
- COMINT indicates that logistic activity in North Vietnam and Laos was light last week but continued heavy in northern South Vietnam.
- photography of northeastern North Vietnam indicated no evidence of new deliveries of military equipment, although sizable imports of trucks apparently have continued.
- Despite the provision in the Laos cease-fire agreement which called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops after the formation of a provisional coalition government, North Vietnam still had some 47,000 troops on Laotian soil at the end of the stipulated 60-day period. (For a discussion of the current status of North Vietnamese forces in Laos, see Annex B.)

* This report has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense. Following this week's issue, this report will appear on a biweekly basis.

June 5, 1974

Preface

This report summarizes evidence received during the reporting period of (I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military supplies toward and into South Vietnam, (II) significant Communist combat activity, and (III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina.

DETAILS

**I. Infiltration and Redeployment of North Vietnamese
Personnel and Military Supplies*****Personnel Infiltration***

1. No new regular infiltration groups were detected entering the pipeline in North Vietnam last week. The observance of three sequential groups destined for the central coast of South Vietnam and an early May reference to a group which is now assessed to fall within a previously reported nine-group gap suggest that at least eight other undetected groups have been dispatched south. The gap probably occurred in mid-April, in part because a communications-liaison station, considered reliable in reporting the dispatch of new southbound groups, was bypassed.

2. Moreover, CIA believes that an additional five groups with some 2,500 troops also moved undetected into northern MR 1 sometime earlier this year (we have arbitrarily included them in the infiltration starts for April). This judgment is based on the sequential numbering of North Vietnamese regular infiltration groups, the particularly low level of infiltration to the area during this infiltration cycle, and the fact that historically we have missed a number of groups going to this area. In addition, a reduction in COMINT collection capabilities and the short travel time to northern MR 1 have degraded our ability to obtain a complete accounting of the troops infiltrating the area.

3. DoD believes that the five groups bound for northern MR 1 have not yet departed from North Vietnam. Confirmatory evidence – either another group in the series or one within the gap – will be required before the additional 2,500 personnel will be added to the DoD totals. Historically, gaps in the numbering of MR 1 groups, which have remained unfilled, reinforce a conservative approach to gapping.

4. In any event, whether using CIA's figures or DoD's lower ones, the total infiltration starts for the 1973/74 cycle approximates that of 1972/73, as shown in the table below (DoD figures are in parentheses).

**Comparative Starts of Troops
from North Vietnam, by Destination
September 1-June 4**

| | 1972-73 | 1973-74 |
|----------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Total | 93,000 | 92,000 (89,500) |
| MR Tri-Thien | 33,000 | 5,000 (2,500) |
| MR 5 | 9,000 | 15,000 |
| B-3 Front | 14,000 | 10,000 |
| COSVN | 26,000 | 39,500 |
| Southern Laos/MR 559 | 11,000 | 22,500 |

Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies

North Vietnam

5. According to COMINT, Communist cargo shipments in the Vinh and Dong Hoi areas of southern North Vietnam continued during the reporting period but were apparently lighter than the previous week. On May 28th, a transshipment element of Binh Tram (BT) 8 near Vinh sent 36 tons of damaged ordnance to a BT 16 unit in the Dong Hoi area. During the period June 1st to 3d, a storage area west of Vinh received more than 50 tons of weapons. Farther south, a storage area near Dong Hoi sent out 37 tons of cargo on June 1st to an undisclosed area.

Laos

6. In southern Laos, aerial reconnaissance showed segments of Route 9 being used moderately, but no large convoys were observed. Farther west, a section of Route 92, which forms part of the Laos supply corridor, was being graded by bulldozers, suggesting that this route will be maintained during the wet season. [] other photography reflected the increased use of the Ban Toung Yun Truck Park and Storage Area on Route 99 -- another indication that at least some resupply activity will be sustained in southern Laos during the wet season.

South Vietnam

7. COMINT indicates that during the week of May 21st-28th, elements of the NVA 541st Engineering Regiment moved more than 2,200 tons of cargo -- much of it ordnance -- in Quang Tri Province. Moreover, aerial reconnaissance of northern South Vietnam reflected that Route 9 and parts of Communist Route 14 were well traveled (see the transportation map).



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8. Farther south, a North Vietnamese rear services element in northern MR 2 reported to MR 559 that on May 29th it had shipped 402 tons of cargo -- all foodstuffs except 46 tons of 100-mm antitank ammunition -- to VC MR 5 on the central coast. On the same day, the unit received 243 tons and 135 tons of foodstuffs from rear service units to the north and northwest.

II. Significant Communist Combat Activity

9. Communist cease-fire violations in South Vietnam continued at a high level for the third consecutive week with a daily average of 114 incidents, compared with the previous week's 121. Casualties for both sides decreased, with ARVN losses down to 31 from 51 daily, and Communist casualties declining to 103 from 141 daily. The week was highlighted by the fall of the ARVN Tieu Atar outpost in Darlac Province of MR 2, the second isolated outpost to fall in the highlands since the beginning of the Communist May-June campaign. Bien Hoa City and airbase in MR 3 received a rocket attack on June 3d that caused the death of more than 30 Communist prisoners near the airfield. Also on that day, a Korean tanker was sunk by sappers at the Nha Be anchorage near Saigon. On June 4th, ARVN forces recaptured An Dien, a village southwest of Ben Cat in Binh Duong Province. The village had been under Communist control since mid-May. MR 4 continues to experience the most incidents, primarily of an isolated and minor nature, although fighting continues around the ARVN Long Khot outpost on the Kien Tuong Province/Cambodian border.

III. Other Military Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina

Preliminary Results of Latest Photography of North Vietnam

10. Because of heavy cloud cover and haze, provided only partial coverage of North Vietnam. Areas observed were limited mostly to the northeastern sector between Hanoi and the China border. The Haiphong Port and the southern Panhandle were not covered because of the poor weather.

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11. Partial coverage of the northeast rail line indicated no signs of military equipment deliveries, and limited coverage of the large armor training facility at Vinh Yen showed no unusual activity or amounts of equipment. The large numbers of trucks in major vehicle parks near the China border, however, suggested that trucks continued to be imported in sizable numbers. One park at Dong Dang held about 2,300 vehicles -- mostly cargo trucks -- several hundred more than last seen at the park in March. Search for the 29 new MIG-19s recently arrived from China was precluded by bad weather. Yen Bai Airfield, the principal point of arrival,

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was totally cloud-covered, and Kep Airfield, another arrival point, showed no MIG-19 aircraft among its normal fighter contingent.

Use of SA-7 Missile in South Vietnam

12. The SA-7 GRAIL surface-to-air missile is an effective supplement to the sizable Communist air defense weapons system in South Vietnam. The weapon is lightweight and easy to fire from the shoulder; its deployment and the numbers in inventory are virtually undetectable. The SA-7 has proved to be an effective weapon; its current fire-to-kill ratio is low -- five-to-one. Since January 1st, eleven aircraft -- five fighter, three observation, two COMINT collection, and one helicopter -- have been shot down west of Saigon, compared with the same number lost countrywide to SA-7s during 1973.

13. There are indications that the Communists may possess a new, modified version of the SA-7. Several missiles have been observed at altitudes above the previously believed range of the weapons (10,000 feet). Further, COMINT indicates that the North Vietnamese have a modified SA-7 in their inventory. This weapon probably has an effective range of some 13,000 feet with an improved weapons design, enhancing its maneuverability.

14. South Vietnamese commanders are increasingly aware of the SA-7's threat to their aircraft and the fact that one of their most effective tactical weapons against Communist ground troops -- close air support -- has been degraded. The recent downings have caused some South Vietnamese pilots to fly at higher altitudes, thereby reducing their effectiveness in a close air support role for ground forces. The South Vietnamese now face the decision of whether to rely on higher altitude interdiction bombing, which is less effective, or to risk increased aircraft losses.

Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

| | | MR 1 | |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| | | VC/NVA | RVNAF |
| VC/NVA ¹ | RVNAF ² | 84,000 | 103,000 |
| 183,000 ³ | 372,000 | 325th | VNMC |
| | | 324B | Airborne |
| | | 304th | 1st |
| | | 711th | 2nd |
| | | 2nd ³ | 3rd |
| | | 673rd AAA | Regional Forces |

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes assigned personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions. Although present for duty strength is no longer available, it is estimated to be about 85% of assigned strength.

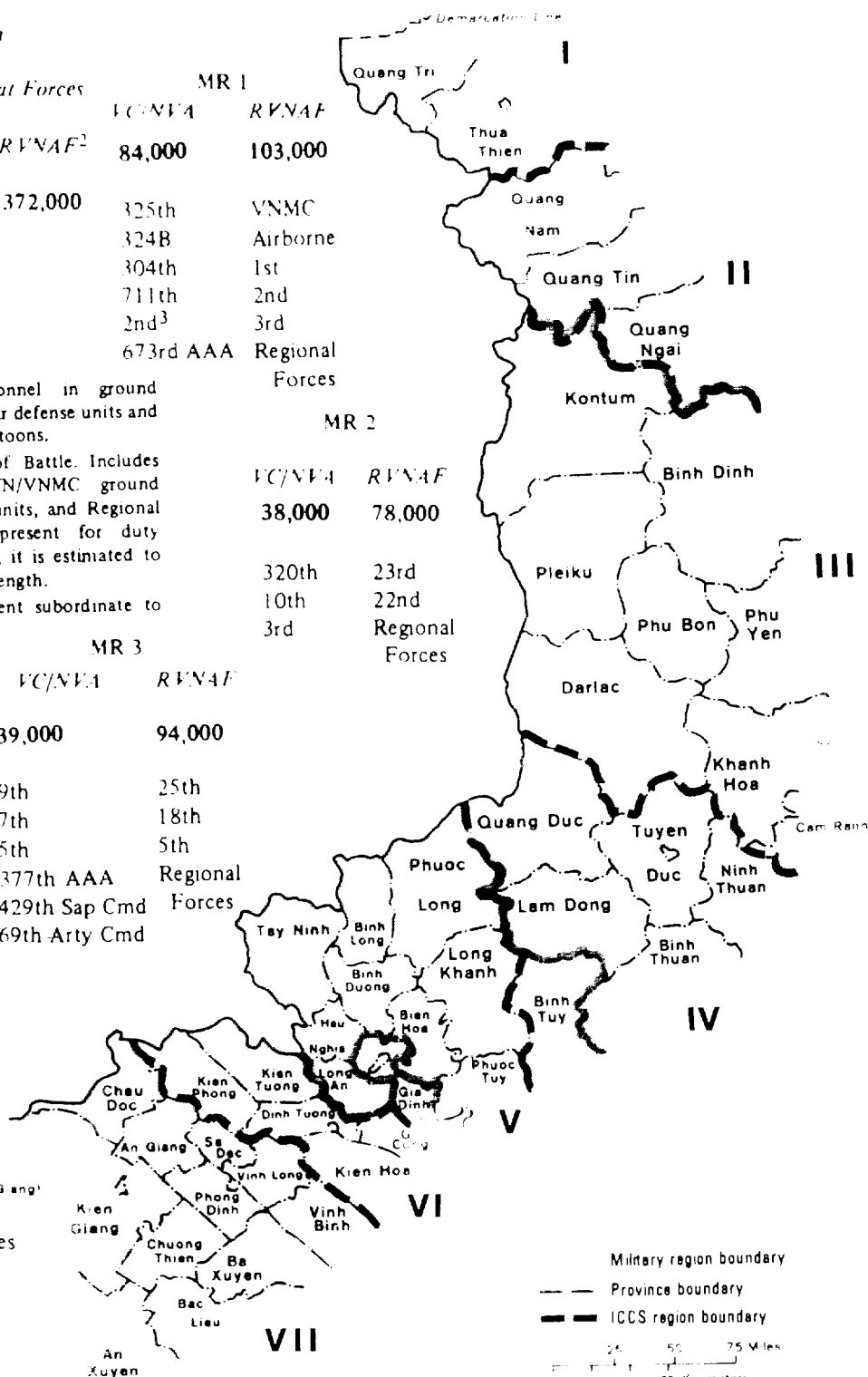
3. Only one infantry regiment subordinate to the division.

MR 3

| VC/NVA | RVNAF |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 39,000 | 94,000 |
| 9th | 25th |
| 7th | 18th |
| 5th | 5th |
| 377th AAA | Regional Forces |
| 429th Sap Cmd | |
| 69th Arty Cmd | |

MR 4

| VC/NVA | RVNAF |
|------------------|------------------|
| 22,000 | 97,000 |
| 1st ³ | 21st |
| | 9th (Kien Giang) |
| | 7th |
| | Regional Forces |



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ANNEX A

INFILTRATION OF NORTH VIETNAMESE PERSONNEL
TO THE SOUTH

Since the implementation of the cease-fire settlement for South Vietnam on January 27, 1973, some 158,000 North Vietnamese troops and specialists have infiltrated southward. About 133,000 of this total have started south since that time. Since June 15, 1973, when the original accord was reaffirmed, some 107,000 troops and specialists have been sent south. The following table shows the number of North Vietnamese troops starting south, by destination, since January 1, 1973.

As stated in paragraph 3, the DoD figures are about 2,500 less than the numbers shown above. In the table below, the DoD figures are indicated in parentheses.

**Number of Troops Entering the Pipeline Destined
for South Vietnam, Southern Laos, and Cambodia
Since January 1, 1973¹**

| | COSVN | B-3 Front | MR 5 | MR Tri- Thien | Southern Laos/ MR 559 | Total |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Total | 52,500 | 15,500 | 22,000 | 17,000 (14,500) | 26,500 | 133,500 (131,000) |
| 1973 | | | | | | |
| Jan-Mar | 12,000 | 5,500 | 4,000 | 5,000 | 1,000 | 27,500 |
| Apr-Jun | 1,000 | .... | .... | 7,000 | 1,500 | 9,500 |
| Jul-Aug | .... | .... | 3,000 | .... | 1,500 | 4,500 |
| Sep | .... | .... | 2,000 | 2,000 | 3,000 | 7,000 |
| Oct | .... | .... | .... | .... | 14,000 | 14,000 |
| Nov | 1,000 | 1,000 | .... | .... | 5,500 | 7,500 |
| Dec | 3,500 | 1,000 | .... | .... | .... | 4,500 |
| 1974 | | | | | | |
| Jan | 10,500 | 3,000 | .... | .... | .... | 13,500 |
| Feb | 5,500 | 2,000 | 1,500 | .... | .... | 9,000 |
| Mar | 12,500 | 2,000 | 4,500 | .... | .... | 19,000 |
| Apr | 6,500 | 1,000 | 5,500 | 2,500 (....) | .... | 15,500 (13,000) |
| May | .... | .... | 1,500 | 500 | .... | 2,000 |
| Jun 1-4 | .... | .... | .... | .... | .... | .... |

1. Excluding special-purpose personnel. The totals are rounded to the nearest 500.

ANNEX B

STATUS OF NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES IN LAOS

One of the most important provisions of the February 21, 1973, cease-fire protocol called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops and military personnel from Laos sixty days after the formation of a provisional coalition government. On April 5, 1974, the Provisional Government of National Union was established, marking the beginning of the stipulated 60-day period during which all remaining foreign troops were to be withdrawn from Laos. The US [] already complied with the withdrawal provision. Hanoi, however, still has some 47,000 North Vietnamese troops on Laotian soil, more than 75% of which are in southern Laos (see the table below).^{*} Of the total, 18,000 are combat troops - including those in six infantry regiments (shown on the accompanying map) - and about 29,000 are logistics personnel.

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**Order of Battle of North Vietnamese Forces in Laos,
by Function and Area**

| | Thousand Persons | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| | Total | | Northern Laos | | Southern Laos | |
| | Jun 74 | Feb 73 | Jun 74 | Feb 73 | Jun 74 | Feb 73 |
| Total | 47 | 83 | 10 | 22 | 37 | 61 |
| Combat ¹ | 18 | 37 | 6 | 16 | 12 | 21 |
| Admin services | 29 | 46 | 4 | 6 | 25 | 40 |

1. Includes personnel in antiaircraft units.

At the time of the Laos cease-fire, Hanoi had some 83,000 troops stationed in Laos, three-fourths of whom were committed to the protection and support of the North Vietnamese logistics system in the Panhandle. Since then, about 36,000 North Vietnamese military personnel have withdrawn from Laos to North Vietnam

^{*} Since the February 1973 cease-fire, our knowledge of Communist forces in Laos has steadily deteriorated. Collateral reporting has dropped off precipitously and COMINT collection capabilities have been reduced significantly. As a result, we no longer have a timely and complete picture of Communist forces in Laos and it is possible that some additional North Vietnamese units have withdrawn undetected.

or to Communist strongholds in South Vietnam, reducing the strength of combat and administrative service personnel by more than 40%. These withdrawals included the entire 316th Infantry Division from northern Laos and three infantry and nine antiaircraft regiments from the Panhandle as well as approximately 17,000 engineer and other logistics personnel.

There have been tenuous indications that other North Vietnamese logistic units in northern Laos may be withdrawing, but the moves could be part of a traditional rainy season drawdown. In southern Laos there has been no recent evidence of impending North Vietnamese withdrawals on a permanent basis. Nevertheless, in the next month or so the Communists probably will temporarily withdraw some additional rear services troops from the Laotian Panhandle as the rainy season takes full effect and logistic activity is reduced.

Available evidence indicates that Hanoi intends to maintain a sizable military force in Laos. A COMINT intercept of late May revealed that one of the two North Vietnamese infantry regiments still in northern Laos will remain there at least until October. Moreover, recent aerial photography indicates that the eastern portion of the Plaine des Jarres will continue to serve as an important North Vietnamese military logistics base. Hundreds of new structures and large storage and vehicle parking areas have been built since the cease-fire, along with permanent improvements to the roads leading through the area. While some of this activity probably represents civilian construction, many of the facilities are clearly military related.

In central Laos, intercepted messages of late May indicated a North Vietnamese infantry regiment with some 2,000 troops was to remain in Khammouane Province disguised as Pathet Lao forces. Referencing both a North Vietnamese Directive and a Military Region 4 Resolution, the message stated:

NVA forces and missions in Laos are to remain as before. However, measures must be taken under the present situation to deny specific evidence to the enemy, which could be used to denounce NVA and Pathet Lao forces and provide an excuse to violate the peace agreement.

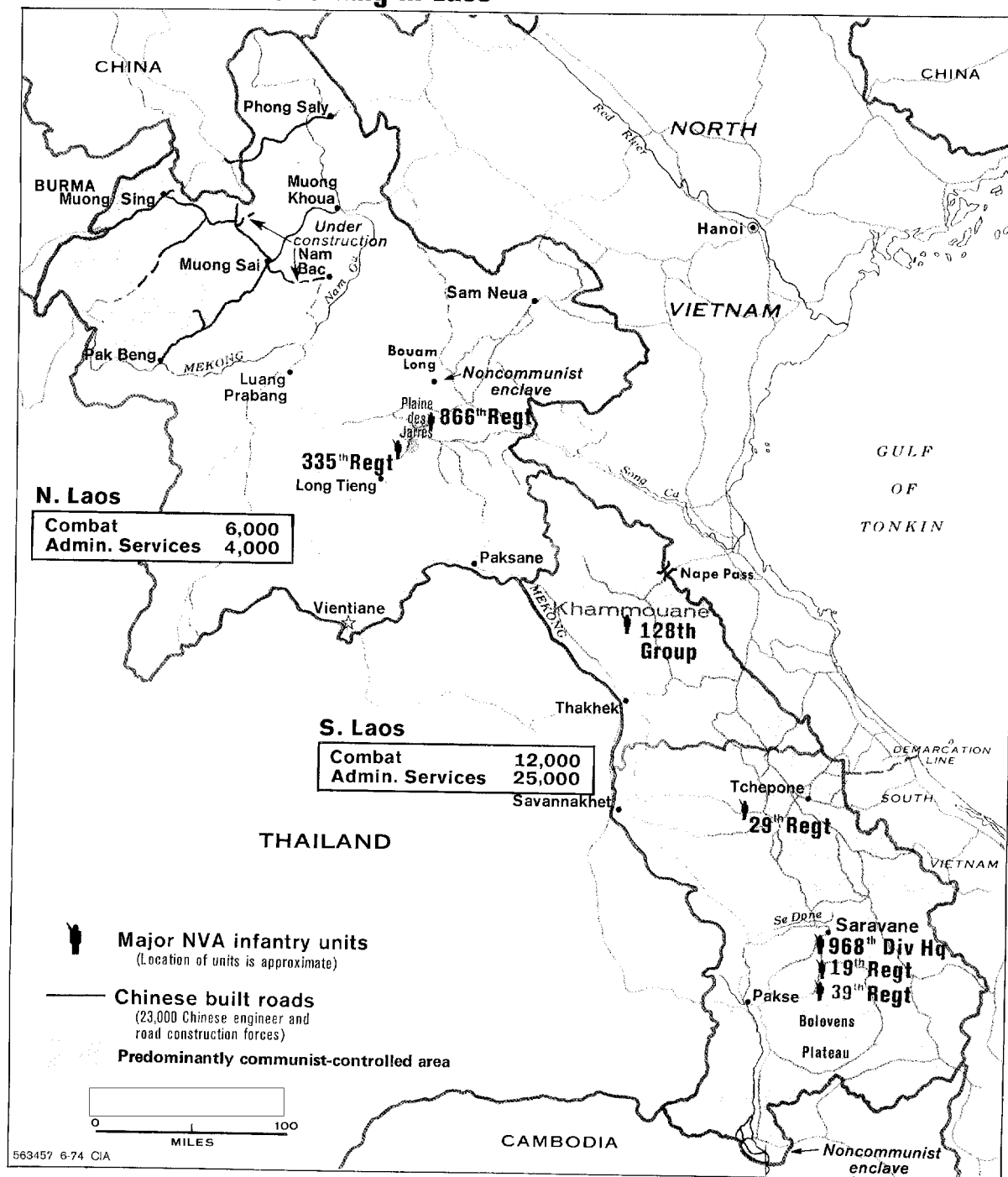
Similar orders also may have been passed to other North Vietnamese combat units in Laos.

In southern Laos, the logistics corridor, which Hanoi so assiduously improved during the past year, is still an integral part of the North Vietnamese system which supports their forces in South Vietnam and adjacent areas. Hanoi will almost certainly not abandon this corridor. The continued maintenance of this system

will require a large, permanent manpower commitment. Moreover, some logistic personnel who have relocated to South Vietnam in the last several months may return to southern Laos next fall when the rainy season has ended.

Chinese Forces. Since last fall, the Chinese in northern Laos have withdrawn all of their infantry and antiaircraft units. Despite the departure of these forces, the Chinese still have some 23,000 engineers and other support personnel in northern Laos and apparently remain committed to constructing, improving, and maintaining roads in the area.

NVA and Chinese Remaining in Laos



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